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ABSTRACT

Thirty-one papers and reports dealing with recent work on language input to children are listed in this annotated bibliography. The annotations, which are descriptive rather than evaluative, summarize the design of each study, the nature of the data, and some of the results and conclusions. Entries by P. Broen, J. Bynon, L. Cherry, J. M. Crawford, O. K. Garnica, M. Holzman, K. Drach, B. Kobashigawa, C. Pfuderer, D. Slobin, M. Lewis, R. Freedle, J. R. Phillips, H. L. W. Remick, V. Ruke-Dravina, J. S. Sachs, R. Brown, R. Salerno, C. E. Snow, and L. C. Traugott deal mainly with the nature of input language. Entries by D. H. Dodd, P. D. Glanzer, and C. B. Farwell are reviews of literature on language input. Works by B. C. Blount, C. A. Ferguson, J. L. Fischer, and R. Klein are cross-cultural comparisons. E. Andersen, C. Johnson, J. B. Gleason, J. Sachs, J. Devin, M. Shatz and R. Gelman deal with the acquisition of "mothers' speech" as a sociolinguistic skill. Other entries by B. Friedlander, E. Newport, R. Scollon, C. E. Snow, and J. Wertsch deal with the relation of input language to language acquisition. (Author/AM)

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22

A SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY ON LANGUAGE INPUT TO YOUNG CHILDREN

Elaine S. Andersen

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The phenomenon of baby talk or nursery language has intermittently over the last few decades attracted the attention of a small number of linguists and anthropologists working in a variety of linguistic communities. In most cases, the brief reports that issued from this interest focused on lexical and phonological deviations from the "standard" adult language (e.g., 4 and 22); in a few instances grammatical and prosodic differences between the two styles were also noted (see Ferguson, 9, for a review of this early literature). Until quite recently, however, investigators of child language paid little or no notice to these observations, for a number of reasons. Perhaps foremost was the prevalent view among theorists in the sixties that input language was generally degenerate, and that it was essential to understand linguistic competence before even attempting to deal with performance. Furthermore, the purported degeneracy of linguistic input suggested there had to be something more, some kind of innate language acquisition device, to explain the rapidity of the language-learning process in young children. The emphasis, thus, throughout the sixties was on determining the nature of these innate mechanisms, to the almost complete exclusion of any basic, systematic research on the verbal environment of the child at different stages of linguistic development. More recently, however, there has been a growing reluctance to accept some of the assumptions on which the innateness hypothesis was based--and with this reluctance has come an impetus to examine more carefully the exact nature of linguistic input.

Probably the earliest product of this new wave of research was a collection of four pilot studies from the University of California at Berkeley's Language-Behavior Research Laboratory (17), which included observational reports of specific aspects of mothers' speech to their children. Then, in 1972, Snow published the results of a series of laboratory experiments which systematically compared the speech of female adults (both mothers and non-mothers) to 2-year-olds as opposed to 10-year-olds (27). Since Snow's study, a rapidly escalating number of observational and experimental studies on this subject have appeared in the linguistic and psychological literature. Along a wide range of dimensions, from careful quantitative examination of prosodic characteristics to analysis of syntactic complexity as well as of semantic categories represented, this research has shown the earlier assumption about linguistic input to be false. Instead, language addressed to young children appears not only to be quite grammatical, but also to vary systematically from language addressed to adults along a number of dimensions where the modifications might well serve a potential usefulness for the child acquiring language.

The annotations which follow cover a substantial proportion, though far from all, of the recent work on language input to children. The annotations are descriptive, rather than evaluative. They summarize the design of each study, the nature of the data, and provide some of the results and conclusions. In general, the studies treat three closely related questions: the nature of input language; the acquisition of "mothers' speech" as a sociolinguistic skill; and the relation of such modified speech to the language acquisition process. Items numbered 3, 4, 5, 6, 13, 15, 17, 18, 20, 21, 22, 23, 27, and 30 deal mainly with the first question; 7 and 8 are reviews of a good part of this literature; and 2, 9, 11, and 16 are primarily cross-cultural comparisons. Numbers 1, 14, 24, and 26 cover the work that has been done on the second topic. The remaining articles (i.e., 10, 12, 19, 25, 28, 29, 31) represent preliminary approaches to the last and perhaps most important question: the significance of the specialized nature of input language for the process of acquiring a first language.

1. Andersen, E. and C. Johnson. Modifications in the speech of an eight-year-old to younger children. Stanford Occasional Papers in Linguistics, Stanford University, 1973, 3, 149-160.

   This pilot study examines the speech of an eight-year-old to an adult, to a peer, and to children five, three, and one and one-half years old, in three different linguistic environments: telling a story, explaining a task, and free play. Speech samples were analyzed along several of the dimensions on which adults have been found to modify their speech to children, including rate and fluency, syntactic complexity, pitch, and intonation. As in the adult studies, this subject's speech to younger children was found to be characterized by slower rate, greater fluency, less complex surface structure, higher pitch, and exaggerated intonation contours. The data also suggest a distinct story-telling register.

2. Blount, B. G. Parental speech and language acquisition: Some Luo and Samoan examples. Anthropological Linguistics, 1972, 14, 119-130.

   One of the few cross-cultural studies published, this analysis of adult-child dialogues in Samoan (mother and elder sister to one boy aged 2;6) and in Luo (father and research assistant to one boy and one girl, both 2;6) classifies input utterances by sentence type. Interrogatives are divided into 11 different subtypes (e.g., What [equational], What [verbal], Who, Where, Why) and declaratives are categorized as Active or Imitative. It is found that speech to children patterns similarly in these two quite different cultures: interrogatives are the most frequent sentence type, followed by imperatives and declaratives. The suggestion is made that differences between this speech and adult conversation are a result of different social definitions and constraints; in adult-child interaction, a hierarchical relationship is established which gives the adult superordinate position and the role of conversation initiator. This may also explain differences in choice of interrogative type between this data and that in an American sample, where children seem to be allocated "conversational peer status." It is concluded that adults universally adjust their speech for children in relation to the child's social status and linguistic competence.

3. Broen, P. The verbal environment of the language-learning child. Monograph of American Speech and Hearing Association, 1972, 17.

   The subjects of this study were ten mothers, each of whom had one young language-learning child (between 18 and 26 months) and one older, linguistically more advanced child (over 45 months). Speech to these children during both free play and story-telling situations, as well as informal

conversation with the experimenter, was analyzed and compared on several measures: rate of speech (words/minute), rate of disfluency, diversity of vocabulary (type/token ratio), percent of repetition, percent of overlap in sentences used by different mothers, and pause placement. There were some differences associated with the speaking tasks, but in general, mothers' speech to the younger children was slower, more fluent, and contained less diverse vocabulary and more repetition; sentence boundaries were clearly marked by pauses (unlike adult-adult speech); and sentence type seemed to indicate two basic patterns (an imperative form and a naming frame). The monograph includes detailed appendices of individual subject data, coded protocols (with coding rules), sentence types used (actual sample sentences), and repetitions and sequential sentences from the data.

4. Bynon, J. Berber nursery language. Transactions of the Philological Society, 1968, 107-161.

From a corpus of 100 lexical items collected by an adult male Berber informant, an analysis is made of the characteristic features of Berber nursery language, followed by a discussion of its function and origins. A comparison to standard language reveals: (1) a higher percentage of vowels and geminates, and a greater frequency of uvular and pharyngeal consonants (found also in other registers for their "expressive value"); (2) two or three special suffixes which perform no essential grammatical role but probably carry attitudinal information; (3) a higher frequency of open syllables; (4) a strong tendency toward reduplication; (5) meanings clustered around a small number of semantic fields (e.g., foodstuffs, domestic animals, body parts). This language is used only by adults or older children in addressing young children to age 3 (and by the infant), for the purpose of "teaching them how to talk." The origin of a high proportion of these words appears to be the standard language, though the opposite process is also found, especially in kinship terminology.

5. Cherry, L. Sex differences in preschool teacher-child verbal interaction. Ph.D. dissertation, Harvard University, 1974.

This dissertation on differential socialization of preschool girls and boys examines the spontaneous verbal interaction between four female preschool teachers and the children (aged 2;9 to 4;5) in their classes. The author tested the four following hypotheses, based on findings of other studies: (1) teachers would verbally interact more with boys than with girls; (2) teachers would be more likely to intitiate a verbal interaction with a boy than with a girl; (3) there would be no difference in the syntactic complexity as measured by mean length of utterance of teachers' speech to girls

and boys; (4) teachers would have different verbal interactional styles with girls and boys--including a greater proportion of attentional markers, directives, repetitions, and verbal acknowledgments to boys, but more fluent speech to girls (i.e., longer and more reciprocal) and a higher proportion of teacher-initiated speech. The first three hypotheses were confirmed. The fourth was partially confirmed: teachers' speech to boys contained more attentional markers and directives; speech to girls contained more verbal acknowledgments. Results confirmed the fact that there are patterns of differential socialization for girls and boys through their verbal interaction with preschool teachers.

6. Crawford, J. M. Cocopa baby talk. IJAL, 1970, 36, 9-13.

The author presents a rather limited corpus of baby talk in Cocopa (a Yuman language spoken along the lower Colorado River in Arizona and Mexico), elicited from one female adult informant during one session. Based on this data, a comparison is made of the consonant inventories of baby speech and adult speech, revealing that the former is considerably reduced. The more specific nature of baby talk replacement is then described, and instances of agreement between these replacements and reconstructed consonants of Proto Yuman are discussed. The suggestion is made that baby speech may be more stable than adult speech.

7. Dodd, D. H. and P. D. Glanzer. Environmental factors in early language acquisition. University of Utah, 1973.

The authors critically review a wide range of literature relating to the effects of environmental factors in first language learning: from learning theory (emphasis on association principles); from linguistic theory (emphasis on innate capacities); and from cognitive theory (emphasis on the nature of input, the primacy of semantics, and strategies of processing language data). A model similar to Farwell (1973) is proposed, with the child's innate facilities and varied aspects of his linguistic and non-linguistic environment all interacting in the process of acquisition. The need for further research into the nature of necessary or even helpful environmental factors is presented.

8. Farwell, C. B. The language spoken to children. Papers and Reports on Child Language Development, Stanford University, 1973, 5, 31-62.

This thorough review of some of the most important work on language input to children deals with three very basic and interdependent issues: the author questions the general linguistic approach of the sixties on several theoretical points concerning language acquisition; she discusses the

problems involved in determining what might be the minimum input from which the child can learn language; and she summarizes the observations which have been made and the early studies carried cut on the actual nature of language addressed to the child. Particular attention is given to work done by Ferguson (1964), to studies in the Berkeley Language-Behavior Lab Working Paper (1969), and to the longitudinal investigations of Brown and colleagues at Harvard on the relations between parent and child speech. The author points out several interesting questions for future research.

9. Ferguson, C. A. Baby talk in six languages. American Anthropologist, 1964, 66 (6), Part 2, 103-114.

This paper compares and contrasts general features of baby talk found in six linguistically and culturally different language communities: (Syrian) Arabic, Marathi, Comanchi, Gilyak, (American) English, and Spanish. The author begins with the assumptions that baby talk is relatively stable and conventionalized, and is culturally transmitted (as opposed to universal and innate), most often being initiated by adults. He then divides the kinds of adjustments which take place in this subsystem of language into prosodic phenomena, phonological and grammatical modifications of normal language, and use of a special set of lexical items, focusing his discussion on specific examples of these last two characteristics. Also considered are the functions baby talk may serve, the variability which exists within and across cultures as to the exact form of baby talk and attitudes toward its use, and the special nature of its diffusion.

10. -----. Baby talk as a simplified register. Paper presented at the SSRC Conference on Language Input and Acquisition, Boston, September 1974.

The author provides a detailed analysis of the structure of baby talk (BT), employing illustrative data from a large number of speech communities. BT is considered one of a set of "simplified" registers for use with people considered unable to understand normal adult speech (AS) properly, since many of its features may be derived from AS by such processes as reduction, substitution, assimilation, and generalization. Also discussed are other processes involved in deriving BT such as clarifying processes--e.g., add redundancy--and expressive and identifying processes, as well as independent material in BT not derivable from AS. Reports of primary and secondary uses of BT are reviewed, followed by speculation as to the functions of BT which might explain its universal presence in speech communities: communication and self-expression, language teaching, and socialization.

11. Fischer, J. L. Linguistic socialization: Japan and the U.S. Families in East and West. Reuben Hill and Rene Konig (eds.). The Hague: Mouton, 1970.

The notion of "linguistic socialization," or learning the culture-appropriate use of language, as distinguished from simple language learning, is discussed. The author compares the aspects of linguistic socialization in the U.S. with those found in a study of Japanese middle-class schoolchildren and offers an explanation for these differences in terms of cultural differences in family and social structure. Japanese mothers tend to talk less to their children (and children talk later), be more favorably disposed to use of baby talk (considering it easier for the child to pronounce and understand), and allow relatively longer use of baby talk (which may serve to signify the continuation of childhood status). Specific examples are longer delay in use of personal pronouns and the substitution of /č/ for /s/ in certain pronouns and terms of address. Cultural differences--which may account for contrasts--include hierarchical emphasis in Japan in contrast to egalitarian emphasis in the U.S. (cf. Blount), and stress on cooperation as opposed to individualism.

12. Friedlander, B. The effect of speaker identity, voice inflection, vocabulary, and message redundancy on infants' selection of vocal reinforcement. Journal of Experimental Child Psychology, 1968, 6, 443-459.

An experiment was designed to investigate the development of voice and listening discrimination in normal infants. Innovative methodology, using behavior analysis toys which offer selection between pairs of pre-recorded voices and other audio reinforcements, made possible statistical analysis of selective listening of three infant boys (aged 11-15 months), during 300 separate play sessions in a naturalistic home setting. Findings included: (1) preference for mother's voice over simple musical feedback; (2) discriminative selection between stranger's and mother's voice; (3) shifting preferences related to variations of inflection, vocabulary, and speaker's identity, as well as to degree of feedback redundancy.

13. Garnica, O. K. Some characteristics of prosodic input to young children. Ph.D. dissertation, Stanford University, 1975.

This study was designed to provide experimental evidence for distinguishing prosodic characteristics of speech to young children. Two groups of female speakers each performed several verbal tasks during two sessions. In one session speech was directed to another adult, and in the other to the speaker's own two-year-old or five-year-old child.

Measurements of fundamental frequency and duration were made on a subsample of sentences from each session. In comparison with the speech to the adult, speech to the two-year-olds was characterized by higher average fundamental frequency, a greater frequency range, longer duration of content words, rising pitch terminals in declarative and imperative sentences, and two primary stresses in some sentences. Speech to the five-year-olds was characterized by a greater frequency range and longer duration of some content words. These characteristics of speech directed to the young child can be seen to serve two functions: (1) a social function, to capture and retain the child's attention to the adult's speech; (2) an analytic function, to aid the child in its linguistic analysis by emphasizing key words and specifying the constituents of sentences.

14. Gleason, Jean Berko. Code switching in children's language. Cognitive Development and the Acquisition of Language. Timothy E. Moore (ed.). New York: Academic Press, 1973, 159-167.

The author discusses observational findings of a study of natural conversations in five similarly constituted families with at least three children each: a first- or second-grader (6-8 years old); a preschool child (4 or 5 years); and a child under age 3. Although the main purpose was to investigate the child's emerging control of different styles, language of adults to children is also briefly described; in addition to the expected baby talk style, a "language of socialization" was found directed to 4- to 8-year-olds. Among children, stylistic variation was observed from the earliest ages, the first being a distinction between speech to family, but silence to strangers. Preschool children code-switched between mothers (whining), peers (verbal play), and adult friends (discursive tales). By age 8, children were seen to have learned formal adult speech, baby talk style, and the language of socialization.

15. Holzman, M. The verbal environment provided by mothers for their very young children. Merrill-Palmer Quarterly, 20 (1), 1974, 31-42.

This paper compares aspects of the verbal environment which four mothers provide for their children in middle and lower socioeconomic class homes, to ascertain the existence of certain SES differences in linguistic input which might be operational in causing "intellectual" developmental differences. Two of the mothers are highly educated (middle SES), while two have no more than high school education (upper-lower SES); the children are two boys and two girls ranging in age from 1;3 - 2;3. Data are verbatim records of the verbal interaction of each mother-

child pair, with results based on two samples of 100 verbalizations from each mother at the time when her child's MLU was two morphemes. The analysis covers: (1) discourse structure of different elliptical forms and nonelliptical sentences; (2) pragmatics (frequency of verbalizations with implicit directions for behavior as opposed to direct orders--the latter considered a possible cause of language deficit); (3) content areas taught by mothers (e.g., names of objects, counting); (4) contexts provided for directions (e.g., moral or aesthetic valuations). Except for the presence of nonstandard utterances in the speech of lower SES mothers, there are no findings of difference in verbal environment related to SES.

16. Klein, R. Word order: Dutch children and their mothers. Master's thesis, Institute for General Linguistics, University of Amsterdam, 1974.

The author examines the word order preferences (mainly in terms of grammatical categories) of two Dutch children and their mothers. Based on speech samples ranging from 44-294 selected utterances per subject--recorded during mother-child interactions when the children were aged 2;0 and 2;3--this study reports that children's productions mirror the order preferences of their mothers and that the rank order of frequencies are the same for all four subjects. The findings are compared to those discussed by Brown (1973) for English and a number of other languages, and in particular to those reported by Park (1970) for German. A new interpretation of the non-Dutch data is offered, with the general conclusion that children never produce utterances with a word order that has not been provided for them with a certain minimum frequency in their mother's speech.

17. Language-Behavior Research Laboratory. The structure of linguistic input to children. U.C. Berkeley, 1969, Working Paper 14.

This volume is a collection of four pioneering articles in the area of language input to children:
1. Drach, K. "The language of the parent: A pilot study." The author compares the speech of an adult to her own child with her speech to other adults, finding the adult-child speech to be slower, shorter in utterance length, syntactically less complex, and less variable in lexical content.
2. Kobashigawa, B. "Repetitions in a mother's speech to her child." Working with the same speech sample as Drach, this paper describes the amount and the nature of repetitions in a mother's speech to her child. It was found that the repetitions constituted over 30 percent of all utterances, usually involved various alterations of their originals, and did not seem motivated by a need to communicate.

3. Pfuderer, C. "Some suggestions for a syntactic characterization of baby-talk style." This study indicates that a mother's speech to her child becomes increasingly complex during the child's second and third year. It is suggested that simplification in baby talk is directly correlated to the language production or comprehension of the child.
4. Slobin, D. "Questions of language development in cross-cultural perspective." The language of Black Oakland schoolchildren to their peers is compared to the language of middle-class parents to their children. Speech modifications are found to be quite similar.

18. Lewis, M. and R. Freedle. Mother-infant dyad: The cradle of meaning. Communication and Affect, Language and Thought. New York: Academic Press, 1973.

The hypothesis is presented that the basis of language development can be found in aspects of the communication system operating between mother and infant at 12 weeks; each member of the dyad is seen as initiating interaction (both vocalizations and gestures) and affecting the other's behavior. Data was collected from two-hour (minimum) observations of more than 80 mother-infant pairs in a naturalistic setting. The infants were all 3-month-old boys and girls from different socioeconomic and racial groups. Results are interpreted as indicating that this early communication network is a nonrandom, sequential, and situationally determined system with considerable individual differences in infant vocalizations related to sex and socioeconomic status at all levels of analysis. For instance, girls are vocally more responsive to maternal behavior, and higher SES infants appear to be more "advanced" in their vocalizations. Pointing to follow-up testing of three infants at 2 years, it is suggested that these differences are relevant to subsequent formal linguistic skills.

19. Newport, E. Motherese and its relation to the child's acquisition of language. Paper presented at the SSRC Conference on Language Input and Acquisition, Boston, September 1974.

The question is raised of the actual importance of input modifications to the language acquisition process. Data collected (in collaboration with Lila and Henry Gleitman) from 15 mother-daughter pairs suggest that some of the modulation of speech to children in fact does have relevance to the course of language learning, but that the rest may result from communication requirements other than those of teaching language. An examination of which features of mothers' language were predictive of various aspects of child language growth revealed no differential sensitivity of the language acquisition system with regard to general

syntactic complexity. Rather, this researcher concluded that there are three types of features to which these very early language learners (aged 1-2 years) are sensitive: the referential properties of the corpus, facts about the surface structures of utterances they hear, and the acoustic clarity of the corpus.

20. Phillips, J. R. Syntax and vocabulary of mothers' speech to young children: Age and sex comparisons. Child Development, 1973, 44, 182-185.

This brief article reports the result of a study designed to compare the speech of adults to children of different ages and sex with that of adults to other adults. Subjects were 30 mother-son pairs and 27 mother-daughter pairs (with children aged 8, 18, and 28 months), each recorded interacting in a free play situation. Speech samples were compared to samples of casual conversation between the mothers and the experimenter, along ten dimensions of syntax and vocabulary. Findings indicated that speech addressed to children is syntactically less complex and contains less varied and more concrete vocabulary, with some modifications a function of the age of the addressee (beginning at some point between 8 and 18 months) but no clear sex-based differences.

21. Rémick, H. L. W. The maternal environment of linguistic development. Ph.D. dissertation, U.C. Davis, 1971.

A detailed study of the speech of eight mothers to their daughters (A-C), aged 16 to 30 months, as compared to speech to the investigator (A-A), found A-C characterized by: (1) fewer words/minute; (2) lower type-token ratio; (3) fewer connectives, filler words, and false starts; and (4) more well marked and grammatical utterances. Other measures showing developmental trends as well as differences between A-A and A-C included: (1) average fundamental frequency (the older the child, the lower the pitch) and range; (2) percent of questions requiring either (a) no answer, (b) elicitation, (c) clarification, (d) yes-no answer, or (e) explanation; (3) number of question pronouns used (first what, then how and who questions increased with age of addressee); and (4) percent of non-present tense verbs (very low for 20-24 months). Explanations increased in frequency in speech to the older children, as did incomplete answers to questions. Sentence subjects were often omitted in A-C, while negatives within clauses were frequent in A-A and most infrequent in the mid-range of the ages studied in A-C. The findings were discussed as evidence for complexity matching by mother and child, and as showing the possibility of two types of linguistic information in relation to a model of second language teaching. A detailed methodology is given.

22. Rūķe-Draviņa, V. Diminutivgebrauch auf verschiedenen Gebieten der Sprache. 2. Ammensprache. Diminutive im Lettischen, 1959, Lund: Hakan Ohlssons Boktryckeri.

This chapter of a dissertation describes the uses of diminutives in Latvian baby talk. Latvian is rich in diminutive formations, and diminutives are especially frequent in baby talk, sometimes as much as one word in three. Unlike adult speech, diminutives are made from various word classes, and a word may have two or three diminutive suffixes. Content areas include child names, body parts, animals, clothes, and food. Diminutives in baby talk often do not refer to size but express affection or simply designate objects for the child as opposed to the adult, e.g., a child may sleep in a "little-bed" which is actually the same size as the adult's. Diminutives of body part names are also used among adults as pet names. Baby talk has many lexical items not found in adult speech, mostly diminutive in form, at times simplified from the adult equivalent, and at other times of other origins. Diminutives are frequent in children's books and occur in technical books about children. The author notes the productivity of diminutives in child speech and parallels in other languages.

23. Sachs, J. S., Robert Brown and R. Salerno. Adults' speech to children. Paper presented at the International Symposium on First Language Acquisition, Florence, September 1972.

The authors examined samples of continuous speech from each of five adults (three female, two male) who were videotaped telling a picture-based story, first to a 22-month-old girl and then to a female adult. The data was analyzed for rate of speech (number of words in first minute of speech sample), number of sentences, use of past tense (in 2-minute sample), and type of sentence (interrogative/simple declarative/complex declarative). Comparison of adult-adult (A) and adult-child (B) speech revealed significant differences on each of these measures; B was slower, contained more sentences per time unit, a greater percentage of interrogatives, and a smaller percentage of complex sentences, but did not differ in use of past tense or simple declaratives. Subjectively, more repetition, higher pitch, and more varied intonation contour were noted. The possible functions of this prosodic variation and its relation to use of interrogatives are briefly discussed. The suggestion is made that the ability of the child for language acquisition be viewed as part of the evolution of communication and enculturation typical of the human species.

24. Sachs, J. and J. Devin. Young children's knowledge of age-appropriate speech styles. Paper presented at the LSA annual meeting, December 1973.

To further the investigation of children's knowledge of speech styles sensitive to the addressee (cf. Shatz and Gelman, 1973), and in particular to examine the importance of feedback in eliciting such styles, the speech of six children (aged 2 to 5 years) was recorded under several conditions: (1) talking to different listeners (adult, peer, baby, baby doll, peer doll); and (2) talking as different speakers (i.e., role-playing as a baby and as a peer doll). Analysis of this data showed that subjects' speech to a younger child or a doll was different from speech to a peer or an adult, with respect to such subtle attributes as types of questions, as well as to MLU, percent of sentence types, types of verb tenses, etc. Moreover, the results indicated that modifications of speech style to a younger listener are not dependent on cues in the immediate situation, but represent some more abstract knowledge of the appropriateness of speech to the listener. It is posited that this kind of ability may be an aspect of the child's "specialization" for language acquisition.

25. Scollon, R. A real early stage: An unzippered condensation of a dissertation on child language. Working Papers in Linguistics, 1973, 5 (6), Department of Linguistics, University of Hawaii.

In this preliminary report of a child's productive language development from age 1;7 to 1;10, the author presents a new approach to the description of the earliest stage of language. Instead of studying isolated sentences, the methodology of this approach insists upon careful examination of utterance context (i.e., discourse analysis) as a prerequisite for grammatical analysis. By developing a distinction between "horizontal" and "vertical" constructions, the investigator views the child as beginning to talk at an earlier age (8 months to 1 year) than usual. Vertical constructions differ from horizontal constructions (i.e., traditional linguistic constructions) in that they lack sentence intonation contour and contain pauses between elements; they are, however, composed of utterances with definite semantic connection appropriate to the context. It is proposed that these vertical constructions (which appear early and later lead into horizontal constructions) are learned through interaction with other [language-proficient] speakers, and that discourse structure is thus the core of sentence structure from the beginning of its development.

26. Shatz, M. and R. Gelman. The development of communication skills: Modifications in the speech of young children as a function of listener. SRCD Monograph, 38, 1973.

This monograph discusses the results and implications of three psychologically oriented studies designed to test whether 4-year-olds possess the communicative skill necessary to adjust their speech to listeners of different ages (2-year-olds, peers, and adults). In Study A, 16 subjects, who had performed poorly on pretests of "egocentrism," were recorded explaining a toy to a 2-year-old and to an adult; in Study B, data was collected for five 4-year-olds, each in spontaneous conversation with an adult and a 2-year-old; and in Study C tapes of eight 4-year-olds talking to peers were obtained and compared to conversations with their mothers. An analysis of the data from all three studies suggests that by age 4, children (regardless of sibling status or sex) have the ability to adjust their speech as a function of the age and language ability of the addressee. Modifications included shorter, simpler, and more attentional utterances to younger children, and peers treated much like adults. The results are considered as support for an interactionist position on language acquisition.

27. Snow, C. E. Mothers' speech to children learning language. Child Development, 1972, 43, 549-565.

In reaction to the assumption that language input to children is largely ungrammatical, this study discusses three laboratory experiments carried out by the author to investigate the actual syntactic nature of mothers' speech to children learning language, i.e., speech to 2-year-olds was compared to speech to 10-year-olds. Experiments also tested the importance of the child's presence and reactions, the effect of task structure, and the significance of experience with children. The subjects were 42 middle-class women (all college graduates)--12 with children aged 9;5 to 12;4, 24 with children ranging in age from 2;0 to 3;4, and six who had no children. The results of these experiments revealed that the earlier assumption about language input was false: mothers' speech to young children was found to be simpler and more redundant than their normal speech. It was found that these differences were at least partially dependent on the reactions of the addressee, but that neither the difficulty of the task nor the experience of being a mother greatly affected modification of speech style.

28. Snow, C. E. Young children's responses to adult sentences of varying complexity. Paper presented at the Third International Congress of Applied Linguistics, Copenhagen, August 1972.

Based on previous studies indicating that adults' speech modifications to children were directed by the child's responses, two experiments were undertaken to determine in what ways the child might do this. In the first experiment, a story session and an instruction task were used to obtain data on children's responses to simplified speech as compared to normal adult speech. During the story the children were scored on attentiveness, and in the instruction task they were scored on correct responses. For both situations, the subjects performed better under simplified speech conditions, suggesting that inattention and inappropriate responses from the child may be the motivation behind baby talk modifications. A second, longitudinal experiment (to cover about four months, starting at age 12-16 months) was designed to investigate exactly what variables determine the difficulty of a sentence for the child at different stages of language acquisition. The procedure was simply to address to the child questions, commands, and suggestions of varying degrees of linguistic complexity and then to observe his responses. The preliminary results and problems of a pilot study of two children are discussed. The author concludes that the process of language learning is not as difficult as linguists had previously assumed.

29. -----. Mothers' speech research: An overview. Paper presented at the SSRC Conference on Language Input and Acquisition, Boston, September 1974.

A summary review is presented of: (1) descriptive and experimental studies of mothers' speech to children learning language; (2) studies of the acquisition of "mothers' speech" as a sociolinguistic skill; and (3) the rather limited number of studies which have attempted to find a direct relation between input and language acquisition. The author introduces a current study of semantic relations in mothers' speech, describes methodological problems, and reports preliminary results. From data on nine Dutch-speaking mothers recorded playing and reading a book with their 23- to 25-month-old daughters (with two mothers tested on two additional occasions at intervals of two to four months), results indicate that the semantic content of mothers' speech is limited to what the child can already produce himself. The argument is made that it is this semantic limitation which produces the grammatical simplicity of input language.

30. Traugott, E. C. On the notion 'restructuring' in historical syntax. Paper given at the Eleventh International Congress of Linguistics, Bologna, August-September 1972.

This theoretical discussion of processes in syntactic change questions the notions of simplification and elaboration which have been prevalent in the literature on language input and language acquisition, as well as in historical linguistics and the study of pidgins and creoles. Critical of the generativist view that children simplify language by restructuring, while adults only innovate and elaborate, the author hypothesizes that simplification and elaboration are terms that apply to comparative linguistics and to metatheory, with either simply a function of what one compares. The point is made that in acquiring greater proficiency in language, children construct and revise their grammars on the basis of their own systems, of universal principles, and of the output of other speakers, and therefore it is wrong to equate restructuring with simplification. It is also posited that the so-called "simplification" which takes place in pidginization is a partial return to innate natural processes which speakers have as children and which probably are factors in determining the nature of baby talk and other varieties of modified speech.

31. Wertsch, J. Simply speaking. Papers from the Tenth Regional Meeting, Chicago Linguistic Society, 1974, 732-741.

The author discusses the possibility that adults simplify their speech for young children, at least in part, in response to the child's lack of "real world" experience and a cognitive limitation which restrict his ability to use contextual information in processing an utterance. Wertsch is concerned with what Grice (1968) has called the "total signification of a remark." This means the proper use of speaker coherence factors, both internal (interpreting an utterance on the basis of the text immediately surrounding it), and external (interpreting an utterance by using general expectations about the speaker). Adults cannot depend on young children to use speaker coherence factors properly because of the child-listener's limited exposure to experiences which give rise to the shared information necessary for the interpretation of remarks and because of the child's purported egocentrism (Piaget, 1955). It is proposed that pronominal reference and conversational implicature are but two linguistic devices adults avoid in input language in response to this inability on the part of child-listeners.

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